



By Stephen Childress

The Big Mo Drive-In Theatre has seen its share of hard times. During its almost 60 years in existence, it's survived more tornadoes than Dorothy, hundreds of severe thunderstorms and 12 years of neglect. Thanks to the hard work and passion of Richard and Lisa Boaz, this historic South Carolina landmark is back like the Terminator, and doing better than ever.

The Big Mo showed its first movie in 1951, closed down in 1986 and then reopened with the Boaz family in the spring of 1999. "It was a lot of work," says Richard. "I spent months cutting trees, refurbishing the concession stand, repairing the signage and fixing up the projection booth." Richard and Lisa chose to restore the drive-in to its original look instead of starting from scratch. "It's a piece of local history that we wanted to revitalize, so it only made sense to try and restore it," says Lisa.

Operating The Big Mo hasn't come without its struggles. In fact, two weeks after they reopened The Big Mo in 1999, a hailstorm



severely damaged the projection booth and concession stand. Undeterred, Richard and Lisa, with the help of family and friends, made the necessary repairs and got The Big Mo off to a great season. Now they're open each year from March to around November. They've even started to expand. Since 1999, they've added a second screen as well as a children's Ferris wheel and train ride. And their concession stand offers a variety of great food, from pizza and popcorn to ice cream and candy.

There aren't many rules at The Big Mo. It's okay to bring your own food and drinks. It's okay to talk during the show if you're in your vehicle. It's okay to bring chairs and sit out beneath the stars. There's only one golden rule for this silver screen—don't block the projector.

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